

REMARKS

The Office Action of December 18, 2003 has been carefully reviewed and this response addresses the concerns set forth in the Office Action. Claims 1-61 are pending in the application. However, claims 3, 7, 9, 20, 21, 23, 30-36 and 44-61 are withdrawn from consideration.

In this response, claims 1 and 15 are amended. Claims 11, 13, 22, 27, 29, 41, and 43 are canceled. Claims 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, and 67 have been added, but correspond substantially to canceled claims 11, 13, 27, 29, 41, and 43, respectively. No new matter has been added.

In the Office Action, claims 1, 4-6, 10 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by Begala (US Patent # 5,595,629). This rejection is respectfully traversed. Begala relates to the use of an acrylamide or acrylate based cationic polymer in a drainage and retention process. Begala does not teach, suggest, or disclose the use a cationic polysaccharide in the process described therein. The claims, as presently amended, are novel over Begala.

Claims 12 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Begala with or without Struck et al (WO 9955962), Persson et al (WO 9955964) or Cauley et al (US Patent # 5,514,249). This rejection is also respectfully traversed.

Claims 12 and 13 further claim the process of claim 1 wherein the suspension has a high conductivity and wherein recycled white water is utilized. As claim 1 is believed novel and non-obvious over Begala for the reasons set forth above, then even, in arguendo, if one skilled in the art were to find evidence that the claimed conductivity is common in making slurry or stock in either Struck, Persson or Cauley, claims 12 and 13, depending upon claim 1, would also be novel and non-obvious for the reasoning set forth above.

Claims 1, 2, 4-6, 8, 10-19, 22, 24-29 and 37-43 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Persson in view of Begala. This rejection is also respectfully traversed.

Persson relates to a process for improving drainage and retention wherein a cationic polysaccharide having a hydrophobic group (either aromatic or aliphatic) is added together with anionic microparticulate material. There is no teaching, suggestion or disclosure of using other cationic polymers. The anionic microparticulate material can be inorganic or organic, preferably anionic silica-based particles (see page 6, line 31-32 of Persson). The anionic polymers of the present invention, are not disclosed by Persson as admitted in the Office Action (see the Office Action page 3, line 6-7, stating that the specific condensation polymer is not shown by Persson).

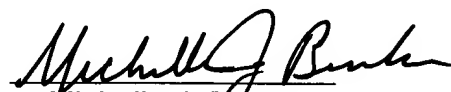
As discussed above, Begala relates to a process for the improvement of drainage and retention comprising the separate addition of an anionic and cationic polymer to a cellulosic slurry. The cationic polymer is an acrylamide or acrylate based polymer. There is no teaching, suggestion, or disclosure whatsoever that other cationic polymers could be used.

As Begala and Persson teach the use of different cationic polymers and different anionic materials, a person of ordinary skill in the art would not be led to combine the two documents to obtain the present invention. Only the present disclosure provides any motivation for combining the isolated disclosures of the cited references in the manner asserted in the Office Action.

In further support of the present application, a Declaration from one of the inventors is submitted with this response. As discussed in the Declaration, the papermaking process according to the teaching of Persson was compared to the papermaking process according to the present invention by measuring the drainage performance. The tests clearly show that the papermaking process according to the present invention shows considerably improved drainage performance over the papermaking process according to the teachings of Persson.

As set forth above, the present invention is both novel and non-obvious over the cited art. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the grounds for rejection set forth in the Office Action is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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